

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

IO-13 /070 W

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R 300901Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3249

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONGEN HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USMISSION USUN

CINCPAC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MY, CB

SUBJECT: MALAYSIA AND DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS

REF: USUN 1809 (NOTAL)

1. GOVERNMENT NEWS AGENCY BERMAMA CARRIED ITEM APRIL 29
ANNOUNCING ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN
MALAYSIA AND DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA AND QUOTING TEXT OF
JOINT COMMUNIQUE. BERNAMA STORY ALSO CITED MFA SPOKES-
MAN THAT EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS WOULD TAKE PLACE AT A
TIME CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE TO BOTH GOVERNMENTS. ITEM
NOTED INCORRECTLY THAT MALAYSIA HAD THUS BECOME FIRST
ASEAN COUNTRY TO HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NEW
CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT. (THAILAND HAS OFFICIAL RELATIONS
AND LIAISON OFFICE AT THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER.)

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2. ACCORDING TO MFA PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INDOCHINA COUNTRIES, CHOO SIEW KIOH, CAMBODIA INITIATED CONTACT WITH MALAYSIA ON THIS ISSUE TWO WEEKS AGO THROUGH LOS CONFERENCE DELEGATION IN NEW YORK. CHOO ALSO UNDERSTANDS THAT CAMBODIANS ALSO APPROACHED OTHER NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES, INCLUDING SINGAPORE, WHO WILL MAKE SIMILAR ANNOUNCEMENT WITH PHNOM PENH ON MAY 3. AS FOR OTHER ASEAN STATES, FILIPINO AMBASSADOR ABU BAKAR TOLD AMBASSADOR UNDERHILL APRIL 29 THAT AS FAR AS HE KNEW NEITHER THE PHILIPPINES NOR INDONESIA HAD BEEN APPROACHED.

3. ACCORDING TO CHOO, GOM WILL OPEN ITS EMBASSY IN PHNOM PENH "DURING THIS YEAR" ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SAY WHEN AN AMBASSADOR WOULD BE APPOINTED. HE CITED THE MODEL OF GOM'S RELATIONS WITH NORTH VIETNAM, SAYING THAT AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS THERE WAS A DELAY IN SETTING UP AN EMBASSY UNTIL SUITABLE PHYSICAL ACCOMMODATIONS COULD BE FOUND.

4. COMMENT. JUDGING FROM REPORTS OF DIPLOMATIC LIFE COMING OUT OF PHNOM PENH, THERE MIGHT WELL BE A LONGER DELAY THAN CHOO ANTICIPATES BEFORE A MALAYSIAN EMBASSY OPERATES IN THAT CITY. GOM IS DISCOURAGED OVER SITUATION IN WHICH ITS HANOI MISSION OPERATES (LITTLE ACCESS TO DRV OFFICIALS, NO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, APPALLING LIVING CONDITIONS), AND SYMBOLIC VALUE OF HAVING PEOPLE ON THE GROUND AND ACTING AS BRIDGE BETWEEN ASEAN AND INDOCHINESE STATES MIGHT NOT BE SUFFICIENTLY COMPELLING TO EXILE DIPLOMATS TO IDLENESS AND DISCOMFORT OF CURRENT PHNOM PENH LIFE. ON THE OTHER HAND, GOM TAKES SERIOUSLY ITS POTENTIAL INTERMEDIARY ROLE AND WOULD PLACE A HIGH VALUE ON BEING FIRST NON-COMMUNIST EMBASSY IN CAMBODIA.

UNDERHILL

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